

AFH 5934/WOH 5932: COLONIAL INTERMEDIARIES

Fall 2022

Dr. Philip Janzen

pjanzen@ufl.edu

Office: 494 Grinter Hall

Office Hours: Mon 2:00-4:00

In-person and online via Zoom

Course Schedule:

W periods 8-10

0013 Keene-Flint Hall

Course Overview

In the last two decades or so, historians of empires have turned increasingly to the study of intermediaries such as interpreters, clerks, soldiers, nurses, evangelizers, and teachers. As channels of communication, these “middle figures” mediated the power dynamics of colonial contexts, contributed to the establishment of colonial states, brokered commercial relations, and used their power for personal gain. At the core of this scholarship is translation, not just of languages, but also of culture and colonization itself. This course will introduce students to this field of research and to its methodological innovations. The course will move across a range of geographies: from the Mediterranean to South Asia, from West Africa to Europe, and from Central Africa to Latin America. Most course readings will draw from history, but we will also consider disciplines and genres such as anthropology, autobiography, and fiction.

Learning Objectives

Over the course of the semester, we will pay particular attention to how a broad understanding of historiography informs strong research questions. As such, the readings include both classic and more recently published texts. Each week, I have paired the primary readings with secondary readings. When considered together, the primary and secondary readings should promote discussion about the historiographical arc of a particular theme or topic. These discussions will prepare you for the final assignment: a research essay.

Required Texts

All required texts are available online or through the UF library. Students may also choose to purchase copies from the UF bookstore or from another bookseller.

- Amadou Hampaté Bâ, *The Fortunes of Wangrin*, trans. Aina Pavolini Taylor (Indiana, 1999 [1973]).
- Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (Granta, 1992).
- Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Duke, 1999).
- Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Duke, 2006).
- Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Cornell, 2011).
- Leo Spitzer, *Lives in Between: The Experience of Marginality in a Century of Emancipation* (Cambridge, 1989).
- Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (University of New Mexico, 2006).
- Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Duke, 2008).

Evaluation

- A) Class Participation (40%): Come to each session having completed the assigned readings and be prepared to participate actively. Please be respectful and empathetic toward one another. We all learn and process ideas in our own ways.
- B) Outline and Bibliography (10%): In Week 6, you will submit an outline of your final essay and a preliminary bibliography.
- C) Presentation (10%): In either Week 14 or 15, you will make a short, conference-style presentation of your research.
- D) Research Essay (40%): Your essay should be based on original research and examine the development of the major scholarly arguments on a topic related to this course. Essays should be 15-20 pages and are due on December 10.

Course Schedule

Week 1	Introduction
8/24	Review syllabus and course expectations

UNIT I: COLONIAL LATIN AMERICA

Week 2 **Translating Conquest**

8/31 Primary Reading: Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman in the Conquest of Mexico* (University of New Mexico, 2006).

Secondary Reading: Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone" *Profession* (1991): 33-40.

Questions: What is the social function of an intermediary? Why (and how) have intermediaries translated the past/their pasts?

Week 3 **In-Between-ness**

9/7 Primary Reading: Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being In-Between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identity, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Duke, 2008).

Secondary Reading: Robert Schwaller, "The Importance of Mestizos and Mulatos as Bilingual Intermediaries in Sixteenth-Century New Spain" *Ethnohistory* 59, no. 4 (2012): 713-738.

Questions: How do intermediaries adapt indigenous cultures and languages? For what ends? Are all intermediaries literate? Are all intermediaries intellectuals?

UNIT II: ACROSS THE MEDITERR-INDIAN

Week 4 **Cultural Brokers and Analytical Machetes**

9/14 Primary Reading: Nathalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Cornell, 2011).

Secondary Reading: Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia" *Modern Asian Studies* 31, no. 3 (1997): 735-762.

Questions: Who are imperial “brokers”? How do they create and transcend the boundaries of empires? Can ideas be translated across empires? Can empires be translated?

Week 5 History and Anthropology in the Indian Ocean, 1120s - 1980s

9/21 Primary Reading: Amitav Ghosh, *In an Antique Land* (Granta, 1992).

Secondary Reading: Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?” *Representations* 37 (1992): 1-26.

Questions: How do sources shape the histories we can and cannot tell? How do narratives distort the past? What does Ghosh’s narrative style accomplish and obscure?

Week 6 No Class

9/28 Outline and bibliography due

UNIT III: AFRICAN INTERPRETERS

Week 7 History and Anthropology in Central Africa, 1850s - 1990s

10/5 Primary Reading: Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon: Of Birth Ritual, Medicalization, and Mobility in the Congo* (Duke, 1999).

Secondary Reading: Philip Janzen, “Linga’s Dream? Interpreters, Entextualization, and Knowledge Production in Central Africa,” *The American Historical Review* 127, no. 2 (June 2022).

Questions: How do intermediaries negotiate their languages and histories? What are the limits and possibilities of “encounter” models? How does physical mobility affect social mobility? Debris?

Week 8 African Interpreters and Invisibility

10/12 Primary Reading: Amadou Hampaté Bâ, *The Fortunes of Wangrin*, trans. Aina Pavolini Taylor, (Indiana, 1999 [1973]).

Secondary Reading: Jeanne Garane, "The Invisibility of the African Interpreter" *Translation: A Transdisciplinary Journal* (2015).

Questions: How are interpreters (and histories) made visible and invisible? Is Wangrin's story true?

Week 9 Tirailleurs

10/19 Primary Reading: Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Duke, 2006).

Secondary Reading: David Killingray, "Ex-servicemen & Politics," in *Fighting for Britain: African Soldiers in the Second World War* (James Currey, 2010): 203-235.

Questions: What is blood debt? How do the languages of military service resonate with languages of reciprocity? What were the politics of African soldiers in the two world wars?

UNIT IV: COMPARATIVE HISTORIES OF MARGINALITY

Week 10 In-Between-Ness II

10/26 Reading: Leo Spitzer, *Lives in Between: The Experience of Marginality in a Century of Emancipation* (Cambridge, 1989).

Questions: What is Spitzer's approach to writing comparative history? What are some of the advantages and pitfalls of writing about intermediaries?

Week 11 Independent Research

11/2 No class

Week 12 Independent Research

11/9 No class

Week 13 Independent Research

11/16 No class

Week 14 Final Presentations (part 1)

11/30 Presentations in class

Week 15 Final Presentations (part 2)

12/7 Presentations in class

OTHER NOTES

Learning in a Pandemic

The following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further our health and safety:

- Attendance: If you are sick, do not come to class. I will not penalize you if you have to miss class, but you must let me know. I will give you a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Frequent unexcused absences will result in a low participation grade.
- Masking: You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit www.umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit www.counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	E	Below 60

Click [here](#) for more info on UF policies for assigning grade points.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is [available here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or at [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).